647 Panchayat : while the Panchayat wanted to dominate them the
623 executive officers placed themselves too high above the Panchayat
578 and regarded themselves sometimes as fallen angels. There were several instances, where the Boards tried to harass the executive officers and the executive officers tried in return to take vengeance on them.

623 **Obligatory and Optional Functions of the Panchayats:** The administrative functions of the Panchayats were divided into two types: obligatory and optional. The obligatory functions included: public works, maintenance and construction of culverts, bridges and roads, burning and burial grounds, provision of water supply, parks, library and newspapers, lighting, public health and conservancy, slaughter houses, managements of fairs and festivals. While the optional functions were plantation of trees, provision of radio, arrangements with regard to infectious diseases, medical relief and donation, etc. Very often the funds of the Panchayats were spent to a large extent on salaries, office contingencies, dearness allowance, and travelling allowance, with little left over for discharging duties either obligatory or optional. (vide Table No. 20)

653 **Public Works** : The arrangements made by the village Panchayats for the construction and maintenance of roads, water tanks, sluices, channels and buildings constituted some of the important items of public works. In most of the villages in South India, provision of water supply and systematic arrangements with regard to maintenance of tanks and distribution of water to fields and settling of disputes arising out of it, were considered to be the functions of the village Panchayats. This was done by the contribution of communal labour according to which every resident of the community was to contribute his share to the maintenance of local public works. Employment of compulsory forced labour for execution of public works like tanks, canals, buildings and roads was a time-honoured custom in South India which continued even today.

Construction of roads and tanks was done by the employment of paid labour alone. But the Panchayats were not at liberty to undertake any work they liked. The Panchayats were generally authorised to undertake public works upto Rs. 250 without the necessity of the sanction of the higher authorities.

Some of the major Panchayats in the Circars and Nellore District had their own overseers and staff like the mistry on their establishment, paid them from their funds and got their works exe-

cuted. But the maintenance of staff for public works did not alone 653
solve the problem. The problems were peculiar and different from Panchayat to Panchayat and the reasons for their slovenly and irregular execution were not one and the same as would be illustrated by some examples from each group.

All the 1st grade Panchayats did not appoint overseers and even 653
those that appointed them had nothing exemplary about their public 652
works. For instance Bhimavaram and Narsapur were the 1st grade Panchayats with their own overseers. Even there all the estimates passed were never executed. For instance, in Bhimavaram, 86 estimates amounting to a sum of Rs. 36,000 for 1946–47 were first sanctioned by the Board, but the same Board soonafter rejected 15 estimates the value of which amounted to Rs. 17,800. Thus there was no consistency in the Public Works Programmes of Panchayats. In Narsapur 61 estimates worth Rs. 19,000 ordinary and capital had been actually executed, though a sum of Rs. 15,000 was allotted for public works, according to the model budget, which required 20 per cent of the gross revenue of the Panchayat to be spent on roads. But this ratio was rarely observed in practice by other Panchayats. Narsapur Panchayat was also able to look after its roads with greater regularity through its overseer and supervisor, than Tuni Panchayat whose negligence of roads was the usual theme. Though it was fit to be a 1st grade Panchayat, it had no supervisor or an overseer. The expenditure on capital works amounted to Rs. 12,000 per year, but even this sum was never actually spent. The estimates and plans were not usually executed, and the amounts allotted for public works were kept in reserve from year to year, leaving the state of communication in a deplorable state. Out of the budget expenditure of Rs. 2,200 for 1946-47 for repairs and maintenance of a total length of road of 15½ miles, only Rs. 1,086 was actually spent on doing some patch work here and there. The condition of roads was very bad. There were not even rivetments near the culverts. The Board maintained a total road of 17 miles, 9 miles of which was metalled and 2 miles gravelled and the rest earthen. The recent appointment of an overseer had not very much changed the situation. The expenditure on public works even for previous years 1944–45 and 1945–46 was not more than 10 per cent of the budgeted amount.

The Ceded Districts or any other parts of the province were in no 653
way better. Guntakal, the biggest Panchayat in Anantpur District revealed the same story. Several estimates for repair of road at Rs. 18,000, for Office Building at Rs. 10,000 and for market stand at a

653 cost of Rs. 5,000 were made, but nothing was practically done nor even a supervisor was appointed to look after the local public works.

These defects were not the monopoly of the 1st grade Panchayats alone. If check measurements were not made, estimates were not actually executed, plans that were put forward were allowed to lag, slackness continued, funds went on accumulating, while condition of roads gradually deteriorated due to the gross negligence even in major Panchayats in the 1st grade, the position in 2nd and 3rd grade Panchayats could not have been better.

Often the plans of public works in the 2nd and 3rd grade Panchayats made no progress far from the resolutions of the Panchayat Board. For instance Ramchandrapuram and Mandapeta, Panchayats in the 2nd grade, were repairing their public roads once in 5 years or [651] whenever they needed repairs. Schemes for construction of drainage and gutters were still under consideration and a drainage tax was introduced at the rate of 25 per cent of the house tax, but it was never utilised. Ramchandrapuram Panchayat had jurisdiction of over 100 roads which were to be maintained and repaired, but they were left in a helpless and unsatisfactory condition. The amount that was allotted for repairs of roads was very inadequate. Panchayats in other districts had nothing better to report. The same indifferernce, inadequate allottment of funds, irregular enforcement of even these assignments, and unsatisfactory conditions unchecked by Local Government Officials were the usual themes. In spite of their good financial position, Panchayats of the calibre of Tanuku and Tadepalligudam in West Godaveri, Vuyyuru and Jaggayapeta in Kistna, Salur and Yelamanchili in Vizagapatam displayed deplorable indifference to this obligation. Some better examples of constructive Panchayats as Kampli and Ravadrug in Bellary, where better attention was being paid to communication were seen, but such instances were very few.

Even among the 3rd grade Panchayats, there were some instances where the picture was not totally bleak. Razole in East Godavari, Kovvur, Ganapavaram, Peatapadu, Undi, Akividu, Achanta and Attili in West Godavari, Gudur and Pedana in Kistna, Madugula and Chodavaram in Vizagapatam, Penu Konda and Gooty in Anantpur, were some of the Panchayats amongst those visited that showed some real signs of interest towards this important obligation. [735] In these places, in addition to regular attention to roads, alms houses for beggars as in Razole were proposed; registers of length of roads and needs for periodic repairs were maintained and attended to; drains, culverts and platforms were constructed, the towns

were surveyed and the encroachments were booked and fined. Metal 653
roads and streets were laid out and their regular repairs were looked after, but this did not mean that affairs were completely satisfactory even here. The same complications and neglect of executing estimated plans and leaving huge balances in arrears were revealed to be more or less a common feature There were streets where sand had been accumulating and while even the earthen roads were not found in some instances. Thus though the position was only comparatively better, they had to go far ahead before they could be said to be discharging their obligations with satisfaction. About the rest of the 3rd grade Panchayats there was nothing to be said except to mention that the same story of indifference and sorrowful neglect repeated itself besides occasional frauds in check measurements, contracts and execution. Instances were seen where the Panchayats had to execute several public works by reducing them to types costing less than Rs. 250/- in order to circumvent the obligation of getting the estimates checked by the District Board. This was leading to gross abuse of the minimum cost concept and an uneconomic waste of public funds. The explanation, given by some Panchayats for over-riding this legal obligation of getting their estimates checked up by the District Board before executing them, was that they wanted to avoid the exorbitant delay and resorting to corrupt means for getting priority for the examination of their estimates by the Local Board's Engineers. Whoever was responsible for this state of affairs, this was a very unhealthy system which had very much corrupted the Public Life and Local Administration. It is high time that something is done to face these unpleasant facts and clean the body politic from these ugly practices which are detrimental to Public Funds as well as to the welfare of the general public.

Surprisingly enough, the minor Panchayats whose income was below Rs. 5000 revealed to be more considerate in the discharge of public works than any of the major Panchayats investigated into. Especially some of the Minor Panchayats in the two Godavaries had been doing some splendid work. Valluru, Yeditha, and Kapileswarapuram in East Godavari, and Palakoderu, Inaparru, Vomavaram, Itempudi and Vasadi in West Godavari had some brilliant records of work to their credit. They had metal roads which were laid down by public subscriptions and they were proud of this achievement. The four villages of West Godavari mentioned above laid down a road of 16 miles at their own cost of Rs. 16,000 contributing, labour, earth and gravel on their own. Taking along with them some adjoining villages, they had constructed village approach roads and feeder

653 roads to the district roads too with their money at a cost of Rs. 32,000 and with a paltry grant of Rs. 5,000 from the Inspector of Local Boards. Local subscription at the rate of Rs. 5 from each of the landlords owning 100 acres was collected. Mukkamala and Kandavilli were important specimens of this type. They constructed a bridge over the canal at a cost of Rs. 880. While the Local Board proposed to give 1/4 of the expenditure, the remaining expenditure was sought to be met with by the funds of the villagers. Mukkamala Panchayat had also laid down a road of 1 mile 7 furlongs at its own cost. Culverts were constructed in all these village Panchayats with the aid of the economic councils that were in existence till 1941. Palakoderu was the best among the minor Panchayats that received the Governor's Medal for its sense of Public Duty and excellent Public Works. While its income was very poor, its work was more satisfactory than that of any other major Panchayat with vast finances. It had a scheme of road construction at a cost of Rs. 30,000 and maintenance at a cost of Rs. 16,000 out of which a grant of Rs. 8,000 was received from Local Boards, Rs. 3,000 from the District Board and Rs. 5,000 from the Panchayat. All the roads were gravelled; besides, a building for Girls School was constructed at a cost of Rs. 1,000 and given as a gift to the children of the village. Even during the time of enquiry, the Panchayat was carrying out a scheme of Rs. 7,500 for gravelling of roads and Rs. 3,500 were already spent. The Inspector of Local Boards had given a grant of Rs. 2,000 while the District Board and Panchayat had to bear the remaining burden. As they did not have any special sources of taxation, the burden had to be met by individual subscriptions. Some such instances of good minor Panchayats were Kasba Jagannadhapuram and Kothavalasa in Vizagapatam, Brahmanayeleru and Lepakshi in Anantpur, where a good civic sense was also responsible for execution of public works.

The rest of the minor Panchayats both in the Circars and the Ceded Districts had no creditable account in public works, not because they had no funds, but because they did not have enough enthusiasm as the other minor Panchayats illustrated above. They were mostly indifferent. Given proper opportunity for proper development with occasional changes in personnel they might certainly improve. But the stagnation created by the absence of elections for nearly a decade made the people and the members of the Panchayats too indifferent. Especially the Panchayats in the Ceded Districts were much more backward than those in the Circars, due to their general backward economic condition.

661 Even the major Panchayats with overseers and mistries, either
653 left the budgeted plans unfinished, neglecting the roads on the plea that plans were not approved by the District Board or executed them in a haphazard piecemeal way by reducing all the estimates to an amount below Rs. 250/- which they could undertake. Some Panchayat budgets showed expenditure on roads, which were never laid but, when caught, sought to plead that they were spoiled by the time the inspecting authority could visit them. There were frauds in preparing the estimates, in the execution of contracts and in the accounts of the amounts shown as paid in the Panchayat budgets. These shady deals go unpunished for want of positive proof. Minor Panchayats portrayed better enthusiasm in the execution of their public works by the use of communal labour. However, to avoid much wastage of public money by the Panchayats more competent, honest and sincere supervising staff to look to their estimates and execution is essential. Corruption, delay and dilatory tactics should seriously be dealt with. Starting of Government Central Depots for storing and selling raw materials like lime, stone, tar, keel and other materials required for public works under Local Boards would mitigate to some extent the present evil of embezzlements of public funds. A close laison between the District Board and the Public Works Department to tighten up the supervision may also improve the position.

312 Though there is no acute water scarcity in the Circars as in the Ceded Districts there is need for providing protected water supply in Panchayats where there are no fresh water wells or to dig more wells where they are inadequate. While the Panchayats have not got resources to undertake this task, the District Boards and the State Government should take more interest.

744 Only some major Panchayats appointed sanitary inspectors,
364 vaccinators, mid-wives and compounders to look after public health, scavengers and thotties to clean the roads, drains, gutters and latrines private and public. The sanitary inspectors looked to the enforcement of the Food Adulteration Act, supervision of the slaughter houses, prevention of infectious diseases, maintenance of the public health, sweeping of the roads, etc. with the assistance of the sanitary staff But many Panchayats were not in a position to undertake most of these functions due to the lack of funds or difficulties in recruiting scavengers and thotties as in the case of Vizagapatam due to the low salaries paid.

231 Slaughter houses were found mostly in the minor and major Panchayats where even the right of collecting the receipts was